Copy for Mr. Weisberg

OTHER VIEWS Marilyn Geewax

It's Time for 'Case Closed'

FOR A GENERATION, Americans have been sitting around kitchen tables debating into the night whether Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in the assassination of John F. Kennedy. This fall, the 30th anniversary of the shooting, the arguments will grow even more heated in the light of new evidence.

For the conspiracy theorists, the opening of the National Archives' huge stash of assassination documents provides countless new possible plot twists. The 900,000 pieces of paper, including investigative photographs and memos, will be hashed over for years.

For those who blame Oswald, a new book provides comforting evidence that the conspiracy theories are bunk. "Case Closed: Lee Harvey Oswald and the Assassination of JFK," published by Random House, uses computer enhancements of the Zapruder film and hundreds of witness interviews to pick apart the theories.

For years, I have vacillated about the assassination theories. The conspiracy boosters always raised enough troubling questions to keep me from accepting the Warren Commission's conclusion that Oswald acted alone.

But "Case Closed" presents so much compelling evidence that it's hard for a reasonable person to read the book and continue arguing for a conspiracy. In fact, author Gerald Posner so completely debunks the assassination myths that I'm embarrassed to think I ever was taken in by them.

Why have so many of us been so willing to believe convoluted theories rather than accept the simple explanation that Oswald did it? Perhaps because we human beings have a tough time acknowledging that really terrible things can happen for no good reason.

Surely some greater force must have been responsible for the death of a president. The CIA, the Mafia, Fidel Castro — yes, any of them could kill our leader, but not some skinny guy with a weak chin...

At least 99 percent of the time, an apparent conspiracy turns out to be nothing but another brilliant or stupid act. Life is full of accidents, mistakes, cruel deeds and goofy coincidences — and more often than we'd like, these miscues and misdeeds lead to tragedy. We hate to accept that, so we make up stories to reassure ourselves that bad things happen for a reason.

After 30 years, it's time to stop trying to comfort ourselves with myths about John Kennedy's death. Our president died because a nut wanted him dead. That's very sad, but it's true.

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Stone Wants More JFK Files Released

Variety

Hollywood

"This is a good start, but it is only the beginning," said film director Oliver Stone ("JFK") on the release of some 800,000 pages of government documents on the Kennedy assassination.

Stone said he's "gratified," but "only about one-third of all the JFK files have yet been released. An estimated 1 million to 2 million documents are still secret. The CIA alone is still withholding some 160,000 pages of material."

"I call upon the president to quickly appoint a review board as required by law so that the rest of this material can be reviewed and released. And I urge Attorney General Janet Reno to re-open the Justice Department's investigation into the assassination.

"This case is not closed. It cannot be closed until all the files are opened and all facts are known. The American people expect no less than the truth from their government," Stone said.

Stone is currently busy finishing two films, "Heaven and Earth," his Vietnam-set movie, and "Natural Born Killers," a reflection of the times, the media and murder.